1st International Workshop on Empirical Research in Business Process Management (ER-BPM 2009)

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Workshop Proceedings

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PREFACE

Providing effective IT support for business processes has become crucial for enterprises to stay competitive. In response to this need numerous process support paradigms (e.g., workflow management, service flow management, case handling), process specification standards (e.g., WS-BPEL, BPML, BPMN), process tools (e.g., ARIS Toolset, Tibco Staffware, FLOWer), and supporting methods have emerged in recent years. Summarized under the term "Business Process Management" (BPM), these paradigms, standards, tools, and methods have become a success-critical instrument for improving process performance.

Research in the area of BPM has traditionally focused on the development and extension of associated tools, methods, standards and technologies. However, when evaluating the suitability of existing BPM technology for a particular project, it is important for practitioners and academics alike to have an informed opinion about their qualities and deficiencies. In particular, the demand for insights or evaluations of BPM technology based on empirical research has largely been neglected so far. This is surprising as the benefits of empirical research have been demonstrated in areas like software engineering (e.g., in the context of software development processes or code reviews), information systems, or, indeed, business for a long time. In fact, from the introduction of empirical research methods such as experimental or case study methods into BPM (as well as into the development of process-aware information systems), we expect more valid, quantitative or qualitative data on the various aspects and effects of BPM technology. This becomes important, not only for IT professionals, but also for researchers dealing with analytical, theoretical or technical challenges in the field of BPM.

The ER-BPM'09 workshop picks up this demand and seeks to stimulate empirical research that, in turn, can contribute to a better understanding of the problems, challenges and existing solutions in the BPM field. In particular, the workshop provides an interdisciplinary forum for both researchers and practitioners to improve the understanding of BPM-specific requirements, methods and theories, tools and techniques. Therefore, the ER-BPM'09 workshop deals with different facets of applying and using BPM methods and technologies; and it will give new insights into the challenges, applications, and perspectives emerging for BPM technology.

We accepted 8 papers (out of 15 submissions) for presentation at ER-BPM '09 that provide examples for how empirical research in BPM can be conducted, and what insights such research can uncover. In her paper, Stephanie Meerkamm empirically analyzes the BPM approach in praxis. By means of interviews at companies located in Franconia, her work allows to gain insights into the way process management is actually realized in praxis (elaborating discrepancies between theory and praxis without focusing explicitly on the elaboration of the reasons). The paper by Koster et. al, in turn, defines a framework for evaluating BPM products, and discusses how this framework has been applied in the development of an open and objective evaluation method for respective products. The paper by Ricken and Petit presents the results of an empirical study in which critical success factors are derived for the application of SOA technologies. The paper by Melcher et. al proposes concepts to meaningfully argue about a person's understanding of process models (for the sake of improving future measurement instruments). Their findings from an experiment, involving 178 students from three different universities, underline the importance of this topic. The paper of Grosskopf et. al intends to improve process elicitation and strengthen the role of the domain expert. The paper by Fahland et. al deals with the rise of interest in declarative languages for process modeling and both justifies and demands empirical investigations into their presumed advantages over more traditional, imperative alternatives. The paper by Gruhn and Laue presents the results from a comparative study that analyzed differences between the semantics of a large collection of EPCs using different tools. Finally, the paper by Melcher and Seese presents an experimental system for empirically analyzing error probability in process models. Results of a conducted experiment with 165 students using this experimental system are reported as well.

Besides these research papers, two short papers have been included in the proceedings. Both illustrate current developments towards community enablement in BPM. The first paper by Grosskopf et. al presents the new "BPMN community" platform. The second paper by Dadam et. al introduces the new AristaFlow community.

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